



MCI Telecommunications
Corporation
1801 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20006

RECEIVED

APR 11 1996

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

April 11, 1996
Mr. William F. Caton
Secretary
Federal communications Commission
Room 222
1919 M Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

DOCKET FILE COPY ORIGINAL

**RE: In the Matter of Implementation of Section 302 of
the Telecommunications Act of 1996, CS Docket No. 96-46; and Open
Video Systems, In the Matter of Telephone Company-Cable
Television Cross-Ownership Rules. Sections 63.54-63.58, CC Docket
No. 87-266 (Terminated).**

Dear Mr. Caton:

Enclosed herewith for filing are the original and four (4) copies of MCI
Telecommunications Corporation's Reply Comments regarding the above-captioned
matter. An electronic version of MCI's Reply Comments have been delivered to Larry
Walke of the Cable Bureau under separate cover.

Please acknowledge receipt by affixing an appropriate notation on the copy of the MCI
Comments furnished for such purpose and remit same to the bearer.

Sincerely,

Lawrence Fenster
Senior Regulatory Analyst

No. of Copies rec'd
List ABCDE

APR 11 1996

6. *Staphylococcus aureus*

APR 11 1996

10

After reviewing the comments of the other parties that filed comments in this proceeding, MCI believes the record shows convincing evidence that the Commission should adopt a specific regulatory framework along the lines advocated by MCI because:

(1) the market for video access and transport is not subject to effective competition; (2) Congress did not direct the Commission to eschew an affirmative and specific regulatory framework; and (3) the dangers of anticompetitive behavior such as cross subsidizing OVS and discriminating in favor of its own programming affiliates remain undisputed outcomes, absent regulatory protection.

II. The Market For Video Access And Transport Is Not Subject To Effective Competition

In its Notice, the Commission asked parties to comment on regulations prescribing just and reasonable rates for video transport, given that “open video system operators generally will be ‘new’ entrants in established video programming distribution markets, lacking in market power vis-à-vis video programming end users....”¹ In order to prescribe the appropriate method of establishing just and reasonable rates, one must first properly define the market. In the case of OVS, that means distinguishing the market for video program distribution from the market for video transport.

A. Video Program Distribution

To date, this market has been comprised of video program distributors: the Cable, MMDS, and DBS operators, who bundle together their own facilities with programming, and market this service to end-users. Prior to the Commission’s establishment of the video dialtone concept, there was no functioning market for video access or transport. It would be incorrect to argue that programmers such as HBO, Nickelodeon, or CNN, are purchasing the service “video access and transport” when they negotiate with cable

¹ Notice, para. 29.

operators to be included in their programming lineups. The reverse is actually the case. In this market, terms are negotiated for the lease of a program by the cable operator.² Programmers have no rights over the use of cable facilities as a result of this market transaction.

B. Video Transport

Now, with the advent of OVS and the initiation of a market for video transport, the video program distribution market may see additional entrants, including LEC programming affiliates as well as non-affiliated programming entities using OVS facilities. In its comments, MCI offered evidence that the market for video transport is not subject to effective competition, since, except for the OVS operator, there is no “supplier of wholesale video access and transport.”³ No other party has offered contravening evidence. The LECs and MFS have misunderstood the issue at hand. They have concluded that the market for video transport is competitive, by referring to the competitiveness of the market for video program distribution. However, the Notice did not state that the market for video transport was competitive. It only asked how OVS video transport rates should be set, given that the OVS operators will not be dominant firms in a different market, the downstream market for video program distribution.

This point is quite destructive of LEC and MFS arguments. In varying ways they argue that since OVS operators are not dominant firms in the downstream market for

² Programmers who pay cable operators to be included in their lineup are not purchasing video access and transport. Programmers marketing new services charge operators a negative rate as the service is rolled out. They expect to have the price turn positive after a year or two. Even if the price remains negative, the programmer is still not purchasing the right to use the video transport facilities of the operator.

³ MCI Comments at 6.

video program distribution, the Commission may rely on its *Competitive Carrier* decisions and forbear from regulating rates of video transport.⁴ However, the market for which the Commission must determine just and reasonable rates is the upstream market for video transport. LECs are dominant firms in this market. No evidence has been provided for the record which contravenes MCI's analysis of this market. Consequently, applying the Commission's *Competitive Carrier* decisions would require affirmative regulation of rates. That is precisely what is required.

III. Congress Intended The Commission To Adopt A Specific Regulatory Framework

All parties agree that those LECs meeting the Commission's rate and nondiscriminatory access conditions for OVS certification, qualify for reduced regulation under Section 653(c) of the 1996 Act. The point of contention hinges on the nature of reduced regulation Congress intended to be available for OVS. To properly answer this question, one must first determine what type of regulation Congress intended for OVS.

A. Hybrid Regulatory Framework Intended For OVS

MCI maintains that Congress intended regulation of OVS to be a hybrid of Title II and Title VI, but neither Title II nor Title VI regulation *per se*. Congress intended some elements of common carrier regulation and some elements of cable regulation to apply. Subsection 653(c)(1)(B) of the 1996 Act requires that the Title VI-like provisions of public, educational, and governmental (PEG) access, must carry, and retransmission

⁴ See MFS Comments at 11; US West Comments at 4; USTA Comments at 14; NYNEX Comments at 23; and Comments of Bell Atlantic *et. al.* at 23.

consent, will apply to OVS. Subsection 653(c)(1)(A) requires that Title VI-like program access, ownership restrictions, negative option billing, subscriber privacy, and equal employment opportunity requirements apply to OVS. Finally, in subsection 653(b)(1)(A) Congress also required the Commission to develop Title II-like provisions with regard to setting rates for video transport and access supplied by OVS.

Congress intended the Commission to apply the principles governing the relevant parts of each Title II and Title VI to OVS. This hybrid regulation was not meant to add Title II requirements to similar Title VI requirements. Congress established a new regulatory mechanism in order to avoid subjecting LECs to duplicate regulation. As Congress stated: "...the requirements of this section shall apply in lieu of, and not in addition to, the requirements of Title II."⁵

B. Congress Intended A Specific Regulatory Framework For OVS

Congress intended OVS operators to be subject to reduced regulatory burdens. LECs and MFS interpret this to mean the Commission should not adopt a specific regulatory framework.⁶ This argument is not supported by the 1996 Act. The 1996 Act exempted OVS from various Title II-like regulations. It eliminated a requirement that OVS operators "make capacity available on a nondiscriminatory basis to any other person for the provision of cable service directly to subscribers."⁷ The 1996 Act also eliminated

⁵ 1996 Act, Sec. 653(c)(2)(B)(3).

⁶ See MFS Comments at 15; Bell Atlantic *et. al.* Comments at 7; NYNEX Comments at 5; USTA Comments at 8; US West Comments at 3.

⁷ *Id.* at Sec. 651(b).

another Title II-like requirement, the need to obtain a section 214 certificate for the establishment of an OVS.⁸

The 1996 Act also exempted OVS operators from various Title VI regulations. Section 653(c)(1)(C) relieved OVS operators from commercial leased access, and most of the franchise-related requirements to which cable companies are subject. Section 653(a)(1) required the Commission to either approve or disapprove an OVS certification within 10 days of the request for certification. While Congress did eliminate some Title II as well as Title VI regulations, it did not reduce the regulatory burden of remaining regulations:

“...the Commission shall, to the extent possible, impose obligations that are no greater or lesser than the obligations contained in the provisions described in paragraph (1)(B) of this subsection.”⁹

It is noteworthy that Congress chose not to reduce regulation on OVS by mandating an across-the-board reduction in either Title II or Title VI regulation.¹⁰ Consequently, there is no support for arguments made by MFS and LECs that the Commission need not adopt a specific regulatory framework. Congress intended the remaining elements of both Title II and Title VI to be applied to OVS in order to reproduce the regulatory safeguards they provide.

⁸ *Id.* at Sec. 651(c)

⁹ *Id.* at Sec. 653(c)(2)(A).

¹⁰ Of course, operators may be eligible for forbearance and other forms of reduced regulation if conditions justify such treatment. But this type of reduced regulation does not lie at the heart of what Congress specifically intended for OVS.

IV. Anticompetitive Actions

Public interest parties, state and local regulators, interexchange carriers, cable companies, CPE manufacturers, and programmers contend that LECs retain incentives to engage in anticompetitive behaviors, either by cross subsidizing their video systems by overcharging customers of monopoly telephone services, or by favoring their programming entity in the allocation of channel location, channel capacity, etc.

A. Cost Allocation

Telephone services devoid of widespread competitive alternatives, such as access rates charged by LECs, are priced well above economic cost. This permits LECs to subsidize their entry into new lines of business, such as OVS. So long as there are some LEC services not subject to effective competition, LECs will have the motive, and absent proper cost allocation, the opportunity to cross subsidize.

Except for US West, LECs are silent on the question of cost allocation to OVS. US West argues that there is no need for cost allocation where LECs are no longer regulated under rate of return regulation, because LECs would not be able to raise rates above competitive levels under other forms of regulation.¹¹ This argument is incorrect. LECs have an incentive to shift the recovery of costs incurred for the provision of more competitive services onto those services able to sustain a supra-competitive price, regardless of the regulatory regime. Whether LECs succeed, depends on whether regulators prevent regulated prices from rising above their competitive levels. This can occur under a price cap regime either if base rates are above competitive levels (perhaps

¹¹ US West Comments at 9.

because costs have been misallocated); or if actual productivity exceeds the productivity index, and misallocated costs reduce the amount of profits available for sharing.

Consequently, US West's argument that the Commission need not address cost allocation to OVS is not supported by economic logic.

B. Other Anticompetitive Behaviors

LECs generally argue that the Commission does not need to adopt specific regulations preventing anticompetitive actions. Instead, they argue that the Commission need only adopt statutory language prohibiting discrimination.¹² As explained in Section III.B above, the LECs are incorrect. Congress did require the Commission to develop a new, and specific, regulatory framework for OVS. The Commission must establish such a framework in order to protect against LEC attempts to undermine the "openness" of OVS.

MCI identifies new evidence, provided by Bell Atlantic *et. al.*, that LECs intend to undermine the openness of open video systems and thereby lessen the number of video distributors. Bell Atlantic proposes that the Commission treat OVS as the same as cable service, rather than as an open video system. For example:

1. Bell Atlantic *et. al.* contend the market relationship between programmers and OVS operators should be the same as between programmers and cable operators. Yet, cable systems are closed systems based on contract carriage;¹³
2. Bell Atlantic *et. al.* propose the Commission judge all OVS rules according to whether they would "make open video systems an attractive alternative for cable operators,"¹⁴

¹² See, e.g., Comments of Bell Atlantic, *et. al.* at 11; US West Comments at 16; NYNEX Comments at 7.

¹³ "Open video systems will not succeed if operators must force video programming providers to accept unfamiliar or undesired business arrangements." *Id.* at 10.

¹⁴ *Id.* at 5.

3. Bell Atlantic *et. al* contend OVS operators are not obligated to provide capacity to multiple video program distributors;¹⁵
4. Bell Atlantic *et. al* contend that OVS operators should be able to deny carriage to parties that do not have contracts with programmers in place prior to approaching an OVS operator for carriage.¹⁶

V. Conclusion

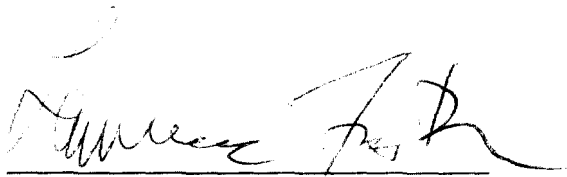
Based on the arguments presented above, MCI urges the Commission to establish a specific regulatory framework for OVS. This framework should require LECs to: 1) perform proper allocation of costs prior to submission of OVS certification; 2) submit unbundled and cost causative tariffs with cost support as a condition for OVS certification; 3) establish a fully separate programming affiliate; 4) require OVS operators to charge their programming affiliated the tariffed rates for video carriage; and 5) require OVS operators to make their contracts available for public inspection.

¹⁵ *Id.* at 12.

¹⁶ *Id.* at 24.

STATEMENT OF VERIFICATION

I have read the foregoing and, to the best of my knowledge, information, and belief, there is good ground to support it, and it is not interposed for delay. I verify under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct. Executed on April 11, 1996.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Lawrence Fenster", is written over a horizontal line.

Lawrence Fenster
1801 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.
Washington, DC 20006
(202) 887-2180

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I, Stan Miller, do hereby certify that copies of the foregoing Comments were sent via first class mail, postage paid, to the following on this 11th day of April, 1996.

Rick Chessen*
Cable Services Bureau
Room 406F
2033 M Street, NW
Washington, DC 20554

Larry Walke*
Cable Services Bureau
Room 408A
2033 M Street, NW
Washington, DC 20554

ITS, Inc.*
1919 M Street, N.W.
Room 246
Washington, DC 20554

Meredith Jones*
Chief
Cable Services Bureau
2033 M Street, NW
Washington, DC 20554

Greg Vogt*
Deputy Chief
Cable Services Bureau
2033 M Street, NW
Washington, DC 20554

Jeffrey Hops
Director of Government Relations
Alliance for Community Media
666 11th Street, N.W., Suite 806
Washington, DC 20001-4542

Peter Arth, Jr.
Edward W. O'Neill
Mary Mack Adu
Attorneys for the People of the
State of California and the
Public Utilities Commission
of the State of California
505 Van Ness Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94102

Peter H. Feinberg
Laura H. Phillips
Steven F. Morris
Dow, Lohnes & Albertson
1200 New Hampshire Ave., NW
Suite 800
Washington, DC 20036

Frank W. Lloyd
Continental Cablevision Inc.
Mintz, Levin, Cohn, Ferris
Glovsky & Popeo
701 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Suite 900
Washington, DC 20004

Gary Shapiro
President
Consumer Electronics
Manufacturers Association
2500 Wilson Boulevard
Arlington, Virginia 22201

Mark C. Rosenblum
Ava B. Kleinman
Seth S. Gross
AT&T Corporation
Its Attorneys
Room 324F3
295 North Maple Avenue
Basking Ridge, NJ 07920

Paul Rodgers
Charles D. Gray
James Bradford Ramsay
National Association of Regulatory
Utility Commissioners
1102 ICC Building, P. O. Box 684
Washington, D.C. 20044

Nicolas P. Miller
Tillman L. Lay
Frederick E. Ellrod III
Miller, Cranfield, Paddock and Stone
Attorneys for National League of Cities
1225 19th Street, NW, Suite 400
Washington, DC 20036

Charles S. Walsh
Seth A. Davidson
Fleischman and Walsh, L.L.P.
Motion Picture Association of
America, Inc.
1400 Sixteenth Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20036

Peter Tannenwald
Elizabeth A. Sims
Irwin, Campbell & Tannenwald, P.C.
1730 Rhode Island Ave., NW, Suite 200
Washington, DC 20036-1811
Attorneys for Community Broadcasters
Association

Michael H. Hammer
Francis M. Buono
Willkie Farr & Gallagher
Three Lafayette Centre
1155 21st Street, NW, Suite 600
Washington, DC 20036
Its Attorneys for Home Box Office

Michael J. Ettner
General Services Administration
Office of the General Counsel
18th & F Streets, NW, Room 4002
Washington, DC 20405

Michael Hammer
Michael G. Jones
Thomas Jones
Willkie Farr & Gallagher
Its Attorneys for Time
Warner Cable
Three Lafayette Centre
1155 21st Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20036

Donna N. Lampert
James Valentino
Charon J. Harris
Mintz, Levin, Cohn, Ferris,
Glovsky and Popeo, P.C.
Attorneys for Cablevision
Systems Corporation
709 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Suite 900
Washington, DC 20004

Howard J. Symons
Fernando R. Laguarda
Mintz, Levin, Cohn, Ferris,
Glovsky and Popeo, P.C.
701 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Suite 900
Washington, DC 20004
Its Attorneys for Tele-Communications,
Inc.

Leslie A. Vial
1320 North Court House Road
8th Floor
Arlington, VA 22201
Attorney for Bell Atlantic Telephone Co.
& Bell Atlantic Video Services Co.

Herschel L. Abbott, Jr.
Michael A. Tanner
Suite 4300
674 West Peachtree St., N.E.
Atlanta, GA 30375
Attorneys for BellSouth Corp. &
BellSouth Telecommunications, Inc.

John F. Raposa, HQE03J27
P.O. Box 152092
Irving, TX 75015-2092
Attorneys for GTE Service Corp.

Gail L. Polivy
1850 M Street, NW, Suite 1200
Washington, DC 20035

Robert A. Mazer
Albert Shuldiner
Vinson & Elkins
1455 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20004-1008
Its for Lincoln Telephone and
Telegraph Co.

Lucille M. Mates
Christopher L. Rasmussen
Sarah Rubenstein
140 New Montgomery Street
San Francisco, CA 94105
Its Attorneys for Pacific Bell

Margaret E. Garber
Pacific Bell
1275 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20004

James D. Ellis
Robert M. Lynch
David F. Brown
175 E. Houston, Room 1254
San Antonio, TX 78205
Attorneys for SBC Communications,
Inc. and Southwestern Bell Telephone

Mary W. Marks
SBC Communication Inc.
One Bell Center
Room 3558
St. Louis, MO 63101

Donald C. Rowe, Esq.
Robert Lewis, Esq.
Counsel for NYNEX Corporation
1111 Westchester Avenue
White Plains, NY 10604

Mary McDermott
Linda Kent
Charles D. Cosson
1401 H Street, N.W., Ste. 600
Washington, DC 20005
Its Attorneys
U.S. Telephone Association

Sondra J. Tomlinson
1020 19th Street, NW, Suite 700
Washington, DC 20036
Attorneys for U S West, Inc.

Howard J. Symons
James J. Valentino
Fernando R. Laguarda
Mintz, Levin, Cohn, Ferris,
Glovsky and Popeo, P.C.
Its Attorneys for Rainbow
Programming Holding, Inc.
701 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Ste. 900
Washington, DC 20004

Daniel L. Brenner
Neal M. Goldberg
David L. Nicoll
1724 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20036
Counsel for the National Cable
Television Association, Inc.

Andrew D. Lipman
Jean L. Kiddoo
Daren M. Eisenhauer
Swidler & Berlin, Chartered
3000 K Street, NW, Ste. 300
Washington, DC 20007
Counsel for MFS Communications
Company, Inc.

Jot D. Carpenter, Jr.
Telecommunications Industry Assn.
1201 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, #315
Washington, DC 20044-0407

Samuel A. Simon, Esq.
901 15th Street, NW, Ste. 230
Washington, DC 20005
for Access 2000

Harvey Kahn
2656 29th Street
Santa Monica, CA 90405
for Access 2000

Mary Gardiner Jones
Henry Geller
901 15th Street, NW, Ste. 230
Washington, DC 20005
for Alliance for Public Technology

Rick Maultra
Cable Communications Agency
200 East Washington Street
City-County Building
Room G-19
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Tom Nicholas
Greater Metro Cable Consortium
14949 East Alameda Drive
Aurora, CO 80012

John A. Levin
G-31 North Office Building
Commonwealth and North Streets
P.O. Box 3265
Harrisburg, PA 17105-3265

Nicholas P. Miller
Tillman L. Lay
Frederick E. Ellrod III
Miller, Canfield, Paddock and Stone
1225 19th Street, NW, Ste. 400
Washington, DC 20036
Attorneys

Maureen O. Helmer
John L. Grow
State of New York Dept. Of Public
Service
Three Empire State Plaza
Albany, NY 12223

Marilyn Mohrman-Gillis
Lonna M. Thompson
Association of America's Public
Television Stations
1350 Connecticut Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20036

Stephen R. Effros
James H. Ewalt
Cable Telecommunications Assn.
3950 Chain Bridge Road
P.O. Box 1005
Fairfax, VA 22030-1005

Sean A. Stokes
UTC
1140 Connecticut Avenue, NW
Suite 1140
Washington, DC 20036

James E. Meyers
1555 Connecticut Ave., NW, Ste. 500
Washington, DC 20036-1103

Andrew D. Lipman
Jean L. Kiddoo
Karen M. Eisenhauer
Swidler & Berlin, Chartered
3000 K Street, N.W., Suite 300
Washington, DC 20007
Counsel for Residential
Communications Network, Inc.

David Cosson
L. Marie Guillory
2626 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20037
Its Attorney for National Telephone
Cooperative Association

Janis D. Everhart
Scott Carlson
1500 Marilla, Room 7D/N
Dallas, Texas 75201
Attorneys for Texas Cities

Lawrence R. Sidman
Verner, Liipfert, Bernhard,
McPherson & Hand, Chartered
901 15th Street, NW, Ste. 700
Washington, DC 20005
Counsel for NBC

Mark Melnick, Esq.
Group W Satellite Communications
250 Harbor Drive
Stamford, CT 06904-2210
Its Attorneys for Gaylord Entertainment
Company

Philip R. Hochbern
Verner, Liipfert, Bernhard,
McPherson & Hand, Chartered
901 15th Street, NW, Ste. 700
Washington, DC 20005
Counsel for NBA, NHL and NFL

Robert Alan Garrett
Johnathan M. Frenkel
Arnold Porter
555 Twelfth Street, NW
Washington, DC 20004
for the Office of the Commissioner
of Baseball

Hiawatha Davis, Jr.
City and County of Denver
Room 451
City & County Building
Denver, CO 80202

Thomas D. Creighton, #1980X
Robert J. V. Vose, #251872
Bernick and Lifson, P.A.
Suite 1200 Colonnade
5500 Wayzata Boulevard
Minneapolis, MN 55416

Blossom A. Peretz, Esq.
State of New Jersey
Dept. Of Treasury
21 Clinton Street, 11th Fl.
P.O. Box 46005
Newark, NJ 07101

Walter S. de la Cruz
Cable Television Franchises
And Policy
11 Metrotech Center, 3rd Fl.
Brooklyn, NY 11201

Celeste M. Basone
State of New Jersey
Board of Public Utilities
Office of Cable Television

James J. Popham
Association of Local Television
Stations, Inc.
1320 19th Street, NW, Suite 300
Washington, DC 20036

Matthew Lampe
City of Seattle
Department of Administrative Svcs.
12th Floor Alaska Building
618 Second Avenue
Seattle, WA 98104-2214

Quincy Rodgers
General Instrument Corp.
GI Communications
Two Lafayette Centre
1133 21st Street, NW, Ste. 405
Washington, DC 20036

Lawrence W. Secrest, III
Peter D. Ross
Rosemary C. Harold
Wiley, Rein & Fielding
1776 K Street, NW
Washington, DC 20006
Its Attorney for Viacom Inc.

John D. Seiver
T. Scott Thompson
Cole, Raywid & Braverman, LLP
1919 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Suite 200
Washington, DC 20006
Attorneys for American Cable
Entertainment

Michael Schooler
Steven Morris
Dow, Lohnes & Albertson
New Hampshire Avenue, NW
Suite 800
Washington, DC 20036
Attorneys for Comcast Cable
Communications, Inc.

Sam Antar
Roger C. Goodspeed
77 West 77th Street
New York, NY 10023
Counsel for Capital Cities/ABC, Inc.

Mark W. Johnson
1634 I Street, NW, Ste. 1000
Washington, DC 20006
Its Attorney for CBS, Inc.

Stephen A. Hildebrandt
1025 Connecticut Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20036
Its Attorney for CBS, Inc.

Robert B. Jacobi
Stanley S. Neustadt
Cohn and Marks
1333 New Hampshire Ave., NW
Suite 600
Washington, DC 20036
Its Attorneys for Golden Orange
Broadcasting Co., Inc.

Henry L. Baumann
Jack L. Goodman
Terry L. Etter
National Association of Broadcasters
1771 N Street, NW
Washington, DC 20036

HAND DELIVERED *


Stan Miller